

Message Text

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ORIGIN ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 SIG-03 OES-09 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 ICA-20 SP-02 SAS-02
PM-05 /092 R

DRAFTED BY ACDA/PA:JMPOPE:CF
APPROVED BY ACDA/PA:TAHALSTED
-----030700 302317Z /61

P 302030Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY
INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS PRIORITY
USDEL MBFR VIENNA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY

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USSALTTWO/CTB

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM, SOPN

SUBJECT: AUGUST 30 ROUNDUP: PRESS ITEMS OF ARMS CONTROL
INTEREST

LONDON FOR AMB/EX, SOFIA FOR AMBASSADOR

1. WALL STREET JOURNAL REPORTED THAT IN STUDY "CERTAIN TO
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PROVOKE CONTROVERSY," ACDA CONCLUDES U.S. HAS CURRENT
THOUGH DECLINING LEAD OVER USSR IN ITS ABILITY TO DESTROY
TARGETS IN NUCLEAR WAR. STUDY, ENTITLED ,U.S. AND SOVIET
STRATEGIC CAPABILITY THROUGH MID-1980S: COMPARATIVE ANALY-
SIS," WAS SUBJECT OF ON-RECORD PRESS BRIEFING TUESDAY BY
PAUL WARNKE. JOURNAL SAID STUDY SHOWS, ACCORDING TO
WARNKE, THAT DESPITE RAPID IMPROVEMENTS IN SOVIET NUCLEAR

FORCES, "OUR RETALIATORY CAPABILITY ISN'T IN DANGER" AND THAT U.S. WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO INFLICT MASSIVE DAMAGE AGAINST SOVIET UNION EVEN IF SOVIETS STRIKE FIRST. JOURNAL SAID "STUDY, WHICH DISCUSSES GRUESOME TOPIC OF FULL-SCALE NUCLEAR WAR IN FOUR PAGES OF DRY PROSE, IS DESIGNED TO COUNTER CRITICS OF CARTER ADMINISTRATION WHO CHARGE THAT U.S. IS TRYING TO NEGOTIATE NEW STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION AGREEMENT WITH SOVIET UNION FROM POSITION OF WEAKNESS.... NEVERTHELESS, CONGRESSIONAL CRITICS WHO WORRY THAT U.S. ISN'T MAINTAINING STRONG ENOUGH DEFENSE

AND WHO BELIEVE THAT EMERGING SALT TREATY COULD LOCK INTO AN INFERIOR POSITION, MIGHTN'T BE REASSURED BY STUDY. STUDY CONCLUDES THAT: 'U.S. IS AHEAD OF SOVIET UNION TODAY IN TARGET-DESTRUCTION CAPABILITY.' WITHIN TERMS OF EMERGING SALT AGREEMENT 'BOTH U.S. AND SOVIET FORCES WILL BECOME SUBSTANTIALLY MORE CAPABLE BY MID-1980S' BUT SOVIET FORCES WILL INCREASE AT FASTER RATE. 'CAPABILITY OF U.S. AND SOVIET STRATEGIC FORCES IN MID-80S IS ESSENTIALLY EQUAL' UNDER PROSPECTIVE SALT ACCORD."

2. WASHINGTON POST PUBLISHED ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORT ON WARNKE BRIEFING. NOTING THAT ACDA "OFTEN TAKES POSITIONS MORE FAVORABLE TO ITS DISARMAMENT OBJECTIVES THAN THOSE TAKEN BY PENTAGON'S MILITARY STRATEGISTS," AP SAID STUDY CONCLUDES THAT U.S. COULD EFFECTIVELY RETALIATE AGAINST UNCLASSIFIED

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SOVIET FIRST STRIKE IN MID-1980S EVEN WITHOUT PROPOSED NEW MX MISSILE. AP SAID WARNKE TOLD NEWSMEN STUDY WAS RELEASED TO PERSUADE PUBLIC THAT "COMMENTS OF SOME OF ALARMISTS ARE INCORRECT" AND THAT THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY THAT SALT PACT WILL COMPROMISE AMERICAN STRATEGIC STRENGTH. WARNKE, ACCORDING TO AP, SAID SOVIET FIRST STRIKE, EVEN IF IT DESTROYED U.S. LAND-BASED MISSILES, WOULD TRIGGER MASSIVE RETALIATION FROM SUBMARINE-BASED MISSILES AND CRUISE MISSILES THAT WOULD DESTROY SOVIET UNION. AP SAID WARNKE DID NOT NAME "ALARMISTS" BUT HE APPARENTLY WAS REFERRING TO GROUPS LIKE COMMITTEE ON PRESENT DANGER, WHICH HAS BEEN ISSUING STATEMENTS SAYING THAT ADMINISTRATION WAS LEAVING U.S. VULNERABLE TO SOVIET FIRST STRIKE THROUGH ITS ARMS CONTROL POLICIES. "BUT STUDY ACKNOWLEDGED TWO OF MAIN POINTS MADE BY SUCH GROUPS," AP OBSERVED. "IT SAID SOVIETS ARE CATCHING UP WITH U.S. IN STRATEGIC CAPABILITY AND WILL HAVE ACHIEVED PARITY BY MID-1980S, EVEN THOUGH AMERICAN CAPABILITY WILL INCREASE DURING THAT TIME. WARNKE DISCOUNTED THAT FACTOR BY SAYING SOVIETS ALREADY HAVE 'ESSENTIAL PARITY' BECAUSE THEY CAN TAKE AN AMERICAN FIRST STRIKE AND STILL DEVASTATE U.S. IN RETALIATION. SECONDLY, STUDY SAID THAT BY MID-1980S, SOVIETS WILL HAVE

CAPACITY TO DESTROY 90 PERCENT OF EXISTING AMERICAN FORCE
OF LAND-BASED MISSILES."

3. UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL REPORTED THAT SOVIET UNION
SET OFF ITS STRONGEST UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR EXPLOSION OF
YEAR YESTERDAY, RECORDING 6.9 ON RICHTER SCALE AT UPPSALA
SEISMOLOGICAL INSTITUTE IN SWEDEN. UPI SAID EXPLOSION, AT
SEMPALATINSK TEST SITE IN WESTERN SIBERIA, WAS SEVENTH
SOVIET NUCLEAR BLAST THIS YEAR. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, DISARMAMENT, PRESS SUMMARIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE220752
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JPMPOPE:CF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780354-0994
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978087/aaaaafmq.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8c090e64-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ACDA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1755591
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AUGUST 30 ROUNDUP: PRESS ITEMS OF ARMS CONTROL INTEREST LONDON FOR AMB/EX, SOFIA FOR AMBASSADOR
TAGS: PARM, SOPN, US
To: GENEVA USSALTTWO MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8c090e64-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014